

cessively as resultants of the condition of the masses; and here comes another product of an evil social system, the low-born harlot who, like an unconscious instrument of retribution, ascends from her native dung-heap to poison the *bourgeoisie* and aristocracy—the rulers, the law-givers, to whom the existence of that dung-heap and its evil ferments is due. In "Nana" depravity coruscates. Here is the so-called "life of pleasure" of the world's great cities, the life of indulgence which recruits its votaries among all the aristocracies, all the plutocracies, all the *lourgeoisies*, all the bohémias. To some, Nana may seem to be "a scourge of God"—assuredly the world's Nanas have wrought more evil than its Attilas—"a punishment on men for their lewd and lawless sensuality/* In Zola's pages one does not witness merely the ruin and disgrace of the professedly profligate; one sees also how natural, youthful desire when exposed to temptation may ripen into depravity and end in misery. One sees, again, the reflex action of libertinism on married life—how wives end at times by following the example of their husbands, and even "bettering the instruction." * From first to last this much-maligned book is a stupendous warning for both sexes, as great a denunciation of the social evil as ever was penned.

But the scene changes, and in "La Terre" (XVIII) appears Jean Macquart, soldier and artisan, who

becomes a peasant.
He, though a brother of Gervaise, has escaped
the hereditary
taint, is strong, sensible, hardworking, a man
destined, one
might think, to a life of useful and happy
obscurity. But
fate casts him among the Fouans, a family
of untutored

i See a clever study of "Nana," by H. Schutz-Wson in the
" New Gen-
tury Review," Vol. T, No. 26, February, 1899.